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"CAMP ROOSEVELT—BUILDER OF BOYS"

BY LILLIAN EWERTSEN.

Illinois has the distinction of being the pioneer in a movement for perfecting better Americanization through the medium of the great American boy. This is the first State in the Union whose educational institutions have taken a forward stride in the education of the boy by means of the summer camp.

Realizing the great need for correlation between the school and vacation periods, the Chicago Board of Education established a national educational-training encampment for boys, known throughout the country as a boy-builder, "CAMP ROOSEVELT". Here, during the summer months, hundreds of boys who would otherwise waste their time in poolroom or equally undesirable haunts, are taught how to "play at useful work". It is found that by taking large groups of boys out in the open, close to nature, by giving them a carefully prepared program of health-building activities, they improve in health, their minds are cleared of cobwebs, and they become alert, keen mentally and clean morally, and return to school in the fall, one hundred percent more efficient, more desirable.

The camp which uniforms each boy in khaki, thereby placing all on equal footing and giving each boy a chance to prove his own merit, is the one which best teaches training in Democracy. Democracy is but another name for broad-mindedness, for tolerance of one's brother man, of four-squareness.

After a careful study, it has been found that the camp operated on a military plan, best inculcates this training. The boy in uniform is taught to reverence the flag, and to obey the orders and instructions of his officers, because order and discipline must prevail if the camp is to accomplish anything for those who are a part of it. The military organization and

discipline are not necessarily pre-eminent factors in camp life. They give to the camp an effective cohesive organization for its better management and discipline. These two important works accomplished, the military side of life should drop almost out of the picture, for there are other values which transcend the military achievements.

One of these is systematic exercise. Out of a national necessity for symmetry in physical development has grown the science of physical education, a branch of education that is almost as highly specialized now as law or medicine or dentistry. That the addition of physical education adds materially to the interests and benefits of life at camp goes without saying, and it is likewise true that the camp surroundings bring an added value to the course in physical training. In other words, the boys respond more quickly and more whole-heartedly to the program of physical training, because it is an essential part of camp life than if the same program were presented to them without the flavor of camp routine. The plan of instruction should include not only the simple exercises of a routine nature, but active participation in such lively pastimes as swimming, baseball, rowing, boxing, and other activities.

It may seem a bit paradoxical to remark that boys study harder during vacation time than at any other time, but the statement seems to be justified by the progress which is made at Camp Roosevelt. Boys who have somehow failed to make good on certain subjects at their home schools find opportunity through the summer school to make up past deficiencies and yet without missing the joys of the summer's outing. Why should not a boy grasp more readily the subjects studied out in the fresh air, under the trees? What better for a laboratory in geology than a summer day's hike through country holding many interesting secrets for the geologist?

A camp where a boy can assimilate all this knowledge and training, and at the same time spend his days in the outdoors in a healthy, carefree way, is the finest solution to the problem of the boy's vacation.

That not only educators, but men in other walks of life, believe thoroughly in this method is proven by the recent ac-

tion of the U. S. War Department in offering the use of such equipment as tentage, cots, etc., by the action of the American Red Cross, in establishing a hospital, with a competent staff of doctors and nurses, who not only look after the health and sanitation of the camp, but who give in addition, thorough instruction in first aid and Red Cross; by the active support of the Y. M. C. A., the Winchester Junior Rifle Corps, and other organizations of national prominence.

This pioneer movement in the direction of boy betterment is ideally located seventy-five miles from Chicago, near La-Porte, Indiana, on the site of what was formerly a boys' school. The tract includes and surrounds Silver Lake, (about eighty acres in extent), with sandy beaches, diving platform, etc. Large fields provide for tentage, sports of all kinds, and parade ground. The ground is rolling, well wooded and drained, and the surrounding country affords opportunity for hikes in every direction. The buildings include a gymnasium, mess hall seating one thousand, kitchens, electric power plant, deep well, modern sewage system, large hospital, classroom buildings, bungalows, dormitories, and recreation rooms.

The instigator of the Camp Roosevelt Plan is Major F. L. Beals, Professor of Military Science and Tactics and Supervisor of Physical Education in the Chicago Public High Schools. Lover and student of boys, Major Beals felt keenly that the summer vacation period is the time when boys slip back two steps for every step forward during the school year. Knowing boy psychology so thoroughly, he formulated a plan whereby the boy could have his fun and his play, in addition to his study and his work, and have all of this in a way that would bring the greatest good to him. This plan he submitted to Superintendent Peter A. Mortenson, who grasped at once the magnitude of such a plan, and aided Major Beals in founding the camp, which was made an auxiliary of the Chicago summer school system.

Being a public institution, of necessity the cost must be sufficiently low to attract the average American boy, not a select and pampered few. For this reason, Major Beals secured the support of public-spirited Chicago business men, who yearly contribute the necessary funds for the mainte-

nance of this immense undertaking, which opens its gates yearly to thousands of boys. The boys themselves pay a very nominal fee for the benefits of the encampment. Mr. Angus S. Hibbard, former Vice-President and General Manager of the Bell Telephone Company, is Chairman of the Camp Roosevelt Association, in charge of financial matters.

The camp is divided into two period of three weeks each. Boys may attend either one or both of these periods, the first of which begins on July 5. There are three divisions in the camp curriculum, the R. O. T. C. or military division; the summer school, which includes seventh and eighth grade subjects and all high school subjects; and the Junior Camp, for boys from twelve to fourteen years of age.

Illinois may be proud of this forward movement in education, for it solves a constantly growing problem which educators the country over have not heretofore been able to cope with. Illinois has taken the lead.